



Agenda Item 05

**JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE
25 March 2021**

RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members of the committee with oversight of the risk registers for the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner. The report also provides an update on developments in the organisational risk processes of the force.

BACKGROUND

West Midlands Police – Risk Management

- 2.1 Since the last committee, the force's corporate risk register has been reviewed to ensure there is the appropriate definition, mitigation, leadership and scrutiny for each risk.
- 2.2 Based on the above, the following amendments, outlined in paragraphs 2.3 - 2.5, have been made.
- 2.3 With the onset of another sustained national lockdown due to CoVID-19, the external risk position of the force has stayed broadly the same since the last JAC update (see Appendix 1 for details). The only areas to experience an upward trend in their residual risk over the period are:
 - "Criminal Justice Case Backlog" (CRR51) – where the reduction in the backlog has slowed (the deficit had been down to as low as 10% in January) with courts having, again, to more carefully manage the throughput of case numbers and trial sitting hours.
 - "Recruitment, Retention and Workforce Resilience" (CRR33) – where the lockdown has again slowed some of our planned investment in the WMP estate and the provision of certain staff training packages.
- 2.4 We have seen some reduction or a flattening in residual risk in a number of areas as control measures implemented in recent months have taken effect. Of particular note are:
 - "Vulnerability and Hidden Crimes" (CRR40) – the residual risk here remains high, but has not deteriorated over the previous period.
 - "WMP2020 Benefits Realisation" (CRR50) – residual risk remains high as we approach CONNECT go-live (go/no-go decision imminent), but the change portfolio remains stable as we move towards the end of the financial year (with the Our Data programme managing any

interfaces between large projects such as CONNECT and CONTROLWORKS). We will also take the opportunity to review our benefits realisation position early in the new financial year.

- “Demand Management” (CRR41) – reduced from high to high-medium – we have seen good progress in reducing response times at the P2 and P3 (non-emergency) grades over two quarters, back to within our service standards.
- “Information Management - Records Management & Crime Data Integrity” (CRR20) – reduced from high to high-medium – our focus on crime data integrity has begun to bear fruit, as the Log Quality Team is providing another line of defence and bringing up standards in our crime recording processes to a healthier position, ahead of the HMICFRS inspection in late-March.

2.5 No new corporate risks have been added to the risk register.

2.6 As previously highlighted, as part of setting up Strategy and Direction as a new standalone department within the force, an initial review of the force’s corporate risk management governance and assurance processes was conducted during Q3.

2.7 Through the course of the review, we consulted with stakeholders to explore at how organisational risk management takes place internally and how that compares with other forces. We looked at four topic areas to gather insights: 1. Risk management strategy and policy; 2. an assessment as to how risk management policies and processes are implemented; 3. how the force’s people and culture impact risk management; and 4. how the central business assurance functions and technology contribute to risk management.

2.8 Our aim was to answer two principle questions:

- Is there evidence that the current approach to managing organisational risk is working effectively at a strategic level?
- Is there evidence that the current approach to managing organisational risk is working effectively at an operational level?

2.9 As this was an initial review, we were not aiming to put forward options or a business case for future organisational risk management models for WMP. Instead we were looking for priority areas for the Strategy and Direction team to address as the department is brought up to full complement.

2.10 The key findings of the review were:

- The force’s approach to risk management is well established and provides support to the organisation in delivering its strategic objectives. There is clear support and sponsorship for risk management at senior levels within the force.
- In the context of the complexity and volume of demand that is managed by the organisation, risk can be considered to be well managed across the force.
- Whilst the current process has been in place for a number of years, it may have become fragmented and inconsistently used in some areas.
- The underlying governance and guidance that supports the approach would benefit from revision, with consideration being given particularly to the documentation and information exchanges that help with risk identification, assessment and resolution.
- There is opportunity to introduce new systems and technology to assist in more consistent and integrated organisational risk management.

2.11 Improvement actions were suggested based on the two principle questions being explored:

- Recommendations for improving the management of strategic risks:
 - More regularly refresh our appetite and attitude to risk, by conducting workshops to identify and rate key risks to strategic objectives
 - Implement a corporate risk management strategy and force risk appetite statement
 - Develop a suite of key risk indicators and trends to be analysed.
- Recommendations for improving the management of operational risks:
 - Offer additional training and a peer review process to better support staff in understanding and managing organisational risk
 - Update risk management policy/guidance to support consistency
 - Upgrade or replace existing organisational risk management system.

- 2.12 Of particular interest to Strategy and Direction are the ways in which implementation of the actions above could increase the maturity of our approach across the organisation and reduce any over-reliance which may have built up over time on the central risk function. Governance is the other area where Strategy and Direction supports the organisation and where this review provides some useful considerations about more closely aligning strategy and risk processes and governance.
- 2.13 We are factoring this review and others into the business planning and performance management arrangements we are currently implementing ahead of the start of the new financial year and will be able to update JAC on the prioritisation and progress of the suggested improvement actions at future meetings.

Police and Crime Commissioner – Risk Management

- 2.14 The Police and Crime Commissioner's risk management strategy is based on the delivery of the police and crime plan. Members of the Committee are aware the Commissioner developed an emergency chapter of the Police and Crime Plan covering the COVID-19 crisis. The emergency chapter includes the four key objectives:-
- Ensuring West Midlands Police responds efficiently and effectively to COVID-19, and works in partnership to protect the public of the West Midlands.
 - Protecting the organisational health of West Midlands Police, so it not only responds to the national emergency effectively, but recovers and returns to normality as quickly as possible.
 - Lead and support the partnership response to the national emergency.
 - Ensuring the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner does all it can to effectively respond to the national emergency, commissioning services that mitigate its effect and support the return to normality.
- 2.15 The risks to policing in West Midlands is if the above objectives are not delivered. To manage these risks the Commissioner has a delivery plan to monitor the actions against each of the objectives. The delivery of the emergency chapter is reviewed by senior managers in the OPCC and the Commissioner's Board.
- 2.16 The existing risk register of the Commissioner continues to be actively managed by the senior management team. The appendix includes the current risk register for the Commissioner for the 12 risks that have highest present risk score. The register now includes activities relating to the emergency chapter in the risk register.
- 2.17 The risk register in the appendix includes the present risk score and the score from December 2020. There has been no movement on risk scores since the committee last reviewed the register in December 2020. However, Items of note include:
- The Medium Term Financial Plan was updated as part of budget 2021/22. This details clear financial projections based on a set of assumptions.
 - Crime levels across the West Midlands have returned to normal levels and there has been significant increases over the last year in recorded domestic abuse crimes and harassment offences. Year to date recorded crime is 5% above last year.
 - In relation to the criminal justice system partnership working has improved but court delays have increased during COVID-19.
 - The risk associated with the organisation not undertaking activities to create, provide and improve pathways into employment and training for young people increased in December 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19 on the economy of West Midlands. A mitigation is the Kickstart programme which WMP and the OPCC are engaged with.
 - In terms of developing a modern workforce and supporting our staff the risk score has remained the same. This is to reflect the police office uplift programme and the target of recruiting extra officers for 2020/21 has been met. This includes the extra 200 through efficiencies and precept increases. A Fairness and Belonging Plan has been developed

and being delivered which is a programme of work to ensure West Midlands Police is as inclusive, diverse and as fair an organisation as possible.

3 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Committee to note the contents of the report and appendices.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name: Harry Barton
Title: Head of Strategy & Direction

Name: Mark Kenyon
Title: Chief Finance Officer

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Risk Appendix 1 and 2